

GAME QUERY

**THE MIND-STRETCHING
ECONOMIST QUIZ**

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John Prideaux and Simon Wright

The
Economist

Books

Published under exclusive licence from *The Economist* by
Profile Books Ltd
3 Holford Yard
Bevin Way
London WC1X 9HD
www.profilebooks.com

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Text design by Sue Lamble
Typeset in Milo by MacGuru Ltd
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Bell & Bain

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 78816 010 0
eISBN 978 1 78283 426 7

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A SEVERE CONTEST

To answer all the questions in this book, you will need to be a polymath. The volume is divided into 12 parts, representing the 12 themed sections of *The Economist*. Each section has 50 questions, making 600 in all. Many people think *The Economist* only covers economics or politics. This is far from the case. As this foreword was being written in June 2017, the latest issue had articles on elephants, Goethe, global football, opioid abuse in Montana, Chinese civil rights lawyers and an obituary for Roxcy O'Neal Bolton, a feminist who campaigned to have storms named after men as well as women.

The questions in the quiz that awaits you are similarly wide-ranging. In fact, they were beyond the wit of any one individual to devise. Several of the authors are members of the *Economist* quiz team, which regularly does battle with other publications under the name “Marginal Futility”, an economics joke that our publishers cruelly rejected as a title for the present volume. (At least we fought off their suggestion of “Megabrains”.)

Mega or not, the brain of one individual usually contains unexpected treasures, and it is the joy of a quiz to bring them to light. Our business affairs editor once amazed us by knowing the star sign of Justin Bieber. Unexpected lacunae, on the other hand, are galling. The author will never recover from the shame of being defeated in a tiebreak question over the date of the Alamo siege. It was 1836, if you must know, not that it's in the book.


And neither is Mr Bieber. The matter of general knowledge quizzes is often disparaged as “trivia”. But in this era of “post-truth” politics, facts are important. Being stumped by the questions is not a failure; it is an opportunity to be better informed. Many of the answers in the back of the book are discursive, explaining the background to the question and some common misconceptions. Polls show that people regularly overestimate figures such as the proportion of immigrants in the population and the amount of money spent on foreign aid; they are also poor at differentiating between risks. Americans are 13.43 times more likely to die from choking on a piece of food than from terrorism, for example.

As a weekly newspaper, we interpret and select the news. Inevitably and openly, that means many of our articles are opinionated. But we aim to back up our opinions with facts; every piece has to survive the rigorous attention of the research department.

The whole process is a collective effort. That’s why, ever since *The Economist* was founded in 1843, it has not featured individual bylines. (An exception is made for our special reports.) Michael Lewis, the author of *The Big Short*, once said the anonymity of our authors was designed to hide our callow youth; alas, a look at the greying heads in our newsroom proves him wrong.

Just like the paper, this book is a collective effort. A team of five from various editorial departments devised the questions. The rounds don’t carry individual bylines but our identities are no secret. The authors are Geoffrey Carr, Philip Coggan, Josie Delap, John Prideaux and Simon Wright. And, just as with each week’s issue, everything had to be fact-checked; Lisa Davies of our research team did the honours.

GAME QUERY

The one thing more enjoyable than getting a tricky question right is knowing that a friend or family member would get it wrong, a fact we had ample opportunity to learn during the composition of this book. Rest assured, none of us could have answered all the questions in the sections we didn't write. That being so, it may seem unnecessary to single out particular questions as difficult – but for those who like an extra challenge, that's what we've done. These “super-hard” questions (and their answers) are clearly marked with a 

Perhaps it was inevitable that *The Economist* would produce a quiz. Every week its contents page proclaims our desire to take part in “a severe contest between intelligence, which presses forward, and an unworthy, timid ignorance obstructing our progress.” These are words to live by. Time to press forward.

Philip Coggan




THE QUESTIONS



Britain


GAME QUERY : Questions

1. Which British monarch has **reigned the longest**?
2. How many people in the last 100 years have become **prime minister** without first having stood as party leader in a general election?
3. What is the **Barnett formula**?
4. What **proportion of the population of England and Wales is Muslim**? (You can have 2% either side.)
5. In which decade did Britain get its **first female MP**?
6. What does the **Salisbury convention** stipulate?
-  7. Only one politician has held all **four great offices of state**: home secretary, foreign secretary, chancellor of the exchequer and prime minister. Who?
8. What is the **highest rate of income tax** ever imposed in Britain and when?
9. In 2006 **Alexander Litvinenko**, a former KGB agent who fled to Britain, was poisoned with polonium while eating at a London restaurant. What kind of cuisine did it serve?

- 10.** A “great paper-weight that for half a century sat upon men’s minds, and when she was removed their ideas began to blow about all over the place haphazardly”. Who was **H. G. Wells** describing?
- 11.** Which politicians were the inspiration for **Butskellism** and what are the four pillars on which it stood?
- 12.** In 1976 Britain earned which **dubious economic honour**?
- 13.** In 2010 **Sir Peter Viggers** was forced to resign as an MP after claiming £1,645 on expenses for what?
- 14.** “I count my blessings for the fact I don’t have to go into **that pit**,” remarked who of what in 1991?
- 15.** The parliamentary constituency of **Dartford** is notable for what?
- 16.** What do both the **largest and smallest constituencies** (by population) have in common?
- 17.** Which **saintly figure** did Margaret Thatcher misquote outside 10 Downing Street after becoming prime minister in 1979?



GAME QUERY : Questions

- 18.** Among Britain's prime ministers since the beginning of the 20th century, a) what is the most common **university** attended; and b) how many did not attend university?
- 19.** To what did **Harold MacMillan** respond with the words "Perhaps we could have a translation, I could not quite follow" in 1960?
- 20.** Harold MacMillan's "**wind of change**" speech signalled the beginning of the end of the British Empire in which part of the world?
- 21.** In what year was the **voting age** lowered to 18?
- 22.** Which was the **first band** to perform on *Top of the Pops*, the BBC's chart show?
- 23.** Who traditionally lived at **12 Downing Street**?
- 24.** Of the four great offices of state, which has never been held by a **woman**?
-  **25.** Which **Labour foreign secretary** also won an Olympic silver medal and a Nobel prize? And in what sport and what field?
- 26.** To which British prime minister was President **John F. Kennedy** related by marriage?

27. Stephen Ward, a key figure in the **Profumo affair**, which ended in the resignation of John Profumo, a secretary of state for war under Harold MacMillan, was a member of which profession?



28. If an MP applies for the **Chiltern Hundreds**, what is she doing?



29. Only one British prime minister has been **assassinated**. Who?



30. In 1981 what did the “**Gang of Four**” do?



31. The following were **nicknames** for which prime ministers? a) The Unknown Prime Minister b) Man of Peace c) The Coroner d) Dizzy e) Grey Man



32. In a career spanning half a century, what was **Winston Churchill's** first ministerial position and in what year was he appointed to it?



33. The word **Tory**, now a nickname for a member or supporter of the Conservative Party, originally meant what?



34. Which **country residences** are traditionally given to: a) the prime minister b) the chancellor of the exchequer c) the foreign secretary?



GAME QUERY : Questions


- 35.** As well as being the **first female mayor** and magistrate in Britain, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson was the first woman to qualify in which profession?
- 36.** What were the **fishing disputes** between Britain and Iceland between the 1950s and 1970s known as?
- 37.** Of whom did **Denis Healey**, a former Labour chancellor, say the following? a) debating with him was “like being savaged by a dead sheep”; b) “He has the face of a man who clubs baby seals”; c) “Yes I have been on a diet but not the _____ one. I don’t want to look like death warmed up.”
- 38.** Sake Dean Mahomet, a Muslim Indian soldier born in 1759, is credited with opening **Britain’s first what?**
- 39.** The first **UK-wide referendum** was held in what year and on what subject?
- 40.** In 1915 Cecil Chubb was the last private owner of which **national landmark**, which he bought as a present for his wife?
- 41.** In which **restaurant**, now closed, did Tony Blair allegedly promise Gordon Brown that if elected prime minister he would serve only two terms before resigning in the latter’s favour?

42. After Tony Blair's visit to Camp David in 2001, George W. Bush joked that they had taken the "special relationship" to a new level because he and the prime minister used the same brand of what?



43. Who married Margaret Kempson in 1942 and Margaret Roberts in 1951?



 **44.** Ronald Millar, a scriptwriter and dramatist, wrote screenplays for MGM and adapted several C. P. Snow novels for the stage. He was also a **speechwriter** for three ministers. Which was his most famous line and for whom?



45. The **package of reforms** enacted on October 27th 1986 was known as what and revolutionised what?



46. What were Britons encouraged to "tell Sid" about in 1986?



47. Which **philosopher** most strongly influenced Enoch Powell, a Conservative politician known mostly for his anti-immigration stance and "rivers of blood" speech?



48. Since 1945 the three largest **parliamentary majorities** were won by which party leaders, in which years? And what were those majorities (to the nearest 10)?



GAME QUERY : Questions

- 49.** When he became prime minister in 1970 **Edward Heath** was unusual in having origins far humbler than those of any of his predecessors and most of his peers. What did his mother and father do?

- 50.** For what did Britain declare its support in the **Balfour Declaration** of 1917?

A large, light gray letter 'A' is centered on a white background. Inside the horizontal bar of the 'A', the words 'THE ANSWERS' are written in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

THE ANSWERS



BENIGHTED KINGDOM : Britain

- 1.** **Queen Elizabeth II**, whose coronation took place in 1952. Since the death of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, she is also the world's longest-serving monarch.
- 2.** **Twelve**, of whom Theresa May is the latest. Of them, nine have been Conservative, two Labour and one Liberal. Five went on to win a general election during their premiership.
- 3.** The rule which **calculates grants for the devolved authorities** by scaling down spending changes in England according to population and levels of devolution. Under the formula Wales does worse than Scotland in terms of spending per head but better than England.
- 4.** According the 2011 census **Muslims** are the second-largest religious group in England and Wales, making up 4.8% of the population, compared with 59.3% who identified as Christian. In a survey by Ipsos Mori, a pollster, Britons overestimated this by a factor of more than four.
- 5.** **In the 1910s**; in 1918 Constance Markievicz became the first woman to be elected to Westminster but as

GAME QUERY : Answers

an Irish republican she did not take her seat. The first woman to do so was Nancy Astor in 1919.

6. It stipulates that **the House of Lords will not oppose legislation** put forward by the government in its election manifesto. It was named after Lord Salisbury, the Conservative leader in the House of Lords from 1942 to 1957.



7. **Labour politician James Callaghan** between the years of 1964 and 1979. He is, however, best remembered for leading Britain through the “Winter of Discontent” in 1978–79.

8. **98%**, when investment income was included in 1974 (but only 750,000 paid it). It was cut to 40% by 1988 by Margaret Thatcher’s government.

9. **Japanese**. The restaurant was a branch of Itsu on Piccadilly, near to The Economist Tower.


10. **Queen Victoria**. She reigned from 1837 to 1901, longer than the average Briton’s life expectancy at the time.

11. **Rab Butler**, a Conservative chancellor of the exchequer, and **Hugh Gaitskell**, his Labour counterpart; **Keynesianism**; **a welfare state**; **consensus between politicians, businesses and trade unions**; and an “**industrial strategy**” to shape the direction of the economy.

12. It was the first advanced country to **go to the IMF for a loan**.

- 13.** **A duck island.** Sales of the ornate shelters for avians collapsed after the scandal. Another MP sent in a bill for cleaning his moat.
- 14.** **George H. W. Bush** of prime minister's questions, the now-weekly session in which the head of the government must answer questions from MPs.
- 15.** It has backed **the party with the most seats** in every election since 1964.
- 16.** **They are both islands**, the Isle of Wight and Na h-Eileanan an Iar, part of the Highlands and Islands. The latter seat used to be known as the Western Isles.
- 17.** **St Francis of Assisi** with the words "Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. And where there is despair, may we bring hope." In fact, he had been dead almost 700 years when the prayer was first printed, anonymously, by a French clerical magazine, *La Clochette*, in 1912. The real author was probably the magazine's editor, Father Esther Bouquerel.
- 18.** a) **Oxford** (12 out of 23 who have held the office);
b) **five** (David Lloyd George, Ramsay MacDonald, Winston Churchill, James Callaghan and John Major).
- 19.** **Nikita Khrushchev** banging his shoe on the table while MacMillan addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations on the subject of the UN's intervention in the former Belgian Congo.

GAME QUERY : Answers

- 20.** **Africa.** He gave the speech to the Parliament of South Africa in Cape Town in 1960.
- 21.** **In 1969** it was lowered to 18 for both men and women. Most men over the age of 21 had been able to vote since 1884 and women over the age of 21 since 1928.
- 22.** **The Rolling Stones** singing “I Wanna Be Your Man”. They also performed on its final show in 2006.
- 23.** Historically it was the **chief whip** but today it houses the prime minister’s press office and strategic communications unit. The upper floor forms part of the prime minister’s apartment and the chief whip’s office has been moved to 9 Downing Street.
- 24.** **Chancellor of the exchequer.** Jacqui Smith, a Labour politician, was the first female home secretary in 2007; Margaret Beckett, also of the Labour Party, became the first female foreign secretary in 2006; and Margaret Thatcher was the first female prime minister in 1979.
-  **25.** **Philip Noel-Baker** won the silver medal for the 1500 metres in the 1920 Olympics and the peace prize in 1959 for his support for nuclear disarmament.
- 26.** **Harold MacMillan.** A nephew of his wife, Lady Dorothy Cavendish, married Kathleen, a sister to Kennedy. She died before Kennedy became president.
- 27.** He was an **osteopath** who treated a number of society figures including Lord Astor and Winston

Churchill's son-in-law. A musical called *Stephen Ward* appeared in the West End in 2013; it was a rare flop for Andrew Lloyd Webber, the composer.

- 28. Resigning.** In the past an appointment to an “office of profit under the Crown” disqualified an individual from sitting as an MP. So any parliamentarian who wanted to give up her seat would be appointed to such an office that no longer had any duties. Appointment to various specified offices is still required and the two specified ones are the Crown Steward and Bailiff of the Chiltern Hundreds and the Manor of Northstead.
- 29. Spencer Perceval** on May 11th 1812. He was shot in the lobby of the House of Commons by John Bellingham, a merchant with an obsessive grievance against the government who believed he had been unfairly imprisoned by the Russians and was owed compensation.
- 30.** Formed the **Social Democratic Party**, a breakaway group from Labour. Roy Jenkins, David Owen, Shirley Williams and Bill Rodgers issued the Limehouse Declaration to establish the party. Most of the SDP joined with the Liberal Party in 1988 to form what is now the Liberal Democrats.
- 31.** a) **Andrew Bonar Law** b) **Anthony Eden** c) **Neville Chamberlain** d) **Benjamin Disraeli** e) **John Major**.
- 32. Undersecretary of state for the colonies in 1905.** As such he was responsible for colonial affairs worldwide.
- 33. Robber or brigand.** It is derived from the middle Irish word *tóraidhe*.

GAME QUERY : Answers

- 34.** a) **Chequers Court** b) **Dorneywood** c) **Chevening House**. Government property is not generally meant to be used for party political purposes, but ministers may host party or political events in these official residences as long as they are at their own or their party's expense with no cost falling to the public.
- 35.** **Medicine in 1865**. She was also a suffragist, the co-founder of the first hospital staffed by women, the first female dean of a British medical school and the first female doctor of medicine in France.
- 36.** **The cod wars**. Iceland won.
- 37.** a) **Geoffrey Howe** b) **John Prescott** c) **Nigel Lawson**.
- 38.** **Curry house**. He opened the Hindoostane Coffee House in Portman Square in London in 1810. Today the curry house is a British institution. Most are run by Bangladeshis; around two-fifths of working-age Bangladeshi men in Britain toil in restaurants. But changes in eating habits, stricter immigration rules and a better-educated British-Bangladeshi population means the future of curry houses is uncertain.
- 39.** In **1975** on the country's membership of the European Community. The vote was 67%–33% in favour of staying in.
- 40.** **Stonehenge**. She didn't like it, so in 1918 he gave it to the nation.
- 41.** **Granita**, an Islington hotspot that served modern British cuisine with a few classics thrown in.
- 42.** **Colgate toothpaste**.

43. **Denis Thatcher.** Thatcher never lived with his first wife, and they divorced after his demobilisation and return to England after the second world war in 1948.



44. “The lady’s not for turning” for **Margaret Thatcher** in 1980, when her government was faced with a severe recession.

45. **The Big Bang,** Margaret Thatcher’s sudden deregulation of the financial markets that largely created today’s City (the common name for London’s financial sector).

46. The chance to buy “affordable” shares in **British Gas** as part of the Conservatives’ programme of mass privatisation let by Margaret Thatcher.

47. **Friedrich Nietzsche,** a German philosopher of nihilism, known for his theory of the Übermensch.

48. a) **Tony Blair,** Labour, won a majority of **179** in 1997;
b) **Tony Blair,** Labour, won a majority of **167** in 2001;
and c) **Clement Atlee,** also Labour, won a majority of **146** in 1945.

49. His father was a **carpenter** and his mother was a **lady’s maid,** though after attending a grammar school Heath did go to Oxford.

50. The establishment in Palestine of a **national home for the Jewish people,** although it qualified this by saying that this should not prejudice non-Jewish communities.